

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed February 2, 2000, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner enter the above amendments and consider the following remarks. Claims 1, 14, and 19 have been amended to more clearly describe the invention. As a result, claims 1-20 are still pending in the application. The Applicant respectfully requests further examination and reconsideration of the application in light of the amendments and accompanying remarks.

Objections to Drawings

The Examiner's objections to the drawings filed with the case are hereby noted. The Applicant appreciates the Examiner holding the formal drawing objections in abeyance until such time that allowable subject matter is indicated.

Rejection of Claims 1-20 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

The Examiner rejected claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Lewis. The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

The Applicant has amended claims 1, 14, and 19 to more clearly describe the present invention. In the present invention, the distal portion of one flange extends forwardly and/or at an angle from the proximal portion to the female connecting portion, and the distal portion of the other flange extends forwardly and/or at an angle from the proximal portion then levels to being substantially parallel to the proximal portion then terminates with the male connecting portion. These features of the flanges enable an improved connection between adjacent units. Moreover, Lewis does not teach these features of the present invention. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully submits that Lewis cannot support the rejection of claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

CONCLUSION

The Applicant has distinguished claims 1-20 over the cited references. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and such action is earnestly requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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